

STRANGE ADVENTURES



H.W. PERL
QUEER-UNCANNY-SUPER NATURAL

"Two weeks ago I bought a 'Joan the Wad' and to-day I have won £232 10s. Please send two more."

—B.C., Tredegar, S. Wales.

Extract From "Everybody's Fortune Book," 1931.



JOAN THE WAD

is the

LUCKY CORNISH PISKEY

who

SEES ALL, HEARS ALL, DOES ALL

JOAN THE WAD is Queen of the Lucky Cornish Piskeys. Thousands of persons all over the world claim that Joan the Wad has brought them Wonderful Luck in the way of Health, Wealth and Happiness.

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If you will send me your name and address and a 6d. stamp and a stamped addressed envelope for reply, I will send you a History of the Cornish Piskey Folk, and the marvellous miracles they accomplish. JOAN THE WAD is the Queen of the Lucky Cornish Piskeys, and with whom good luck and good health always attend.

AS HEALER

One lady writes: "My sister suffered very badly for years, but since I gave her a Joan the Wad to keep near her she is much easier. Do you think this is due to Joan or the Water from the Lucky well?"

AS LUCK BRINGER

Another writes: "Since the War my wife and I have been dogged by persistent ill-luck, and we seemed to be sinking lower and lower. One day someone sent us a Joan the Wad. We have never found out who it was, but, coincidence if you like, within a week I got a much better job and my wife had some money left her. Since then we have never looked back and, needless to say, swear by 'Queen Joan'."

AS MATCHMAKER

A young girl wrote and informed me that she had scores of boy friends, but it was not until she had visited Cornwall and taken Joan back with her that she met the boy of her dreams, and as they got better acquainted she discovered he also has "Joan the Wad."

AS PRIZEWINNER

A young man wrote us only last week: "For two years I entered competitions without luck, but since getting Joan the Wad I have frequently been successful, although I have not won a big prize, but I know that —, who won £2,000 in a competition, has one, because I gave it him. When he won his £2,000 he gave me £100 for myself, so you see I have cause to bless 'Queen Joan'."

AS SPECULATOR

A man writes: "I had some shares that for several years I couldn't give away. They were 1/- shares, and all of a sudden they went up in the market to 7/9. I happened to be staring at Joan the Wad. Pure imagination, you may say, but I thought I saw her wink approvingly. I sold out, reinvested the money at greater profit and have prospered ever since."

*All you have to do is to send a 6d. stamp and a stamped
addressed envelope for the history to:*

102, JOAN'S COTTAGE, LANIVET, BODMIN

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MARY HAD A LITTLE . . . ?—BY N. WESLEY FORTH.

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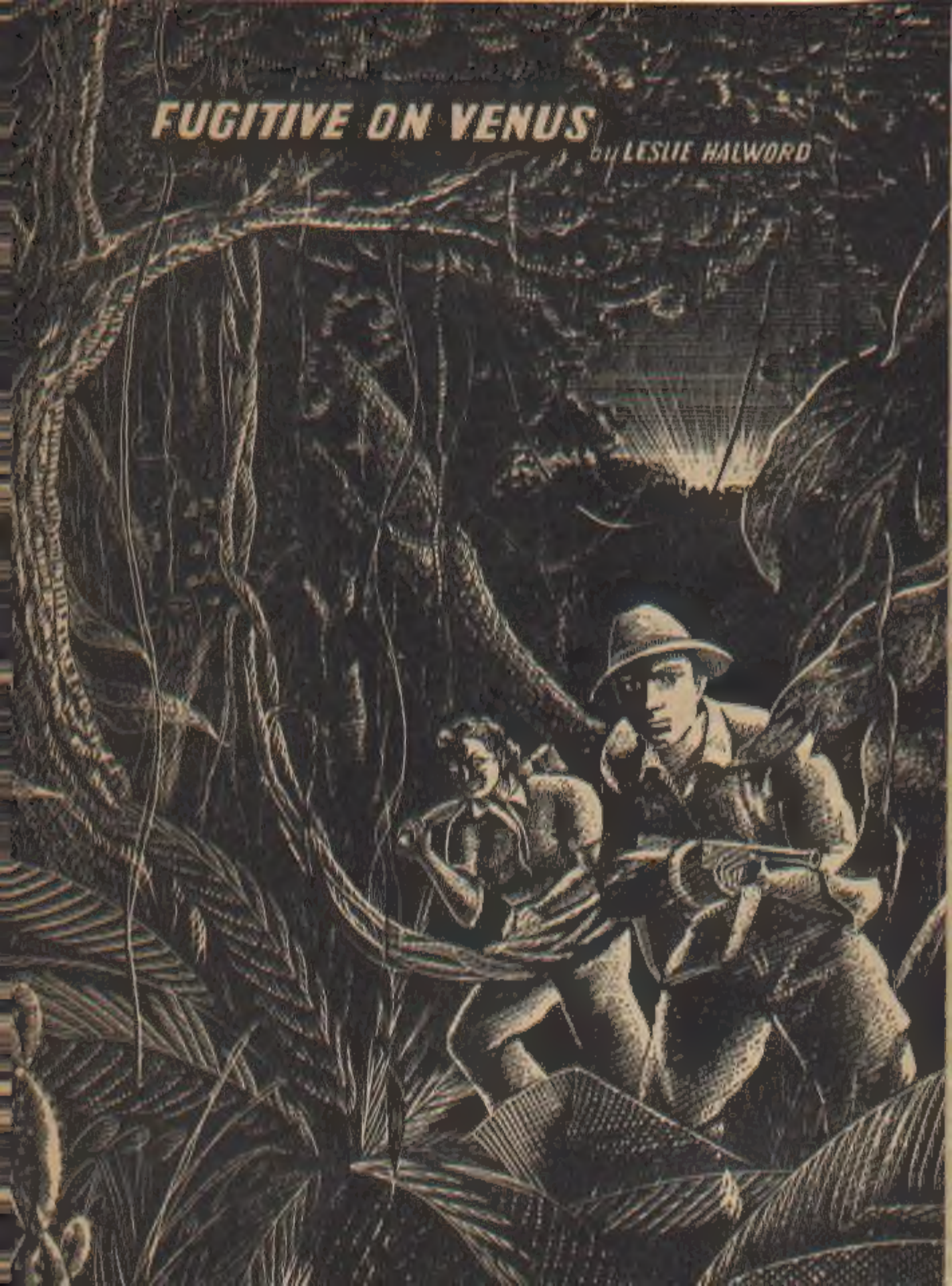
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If you have enjoyed reading "AMAZING ADVENTURES" you can obtain the companion magazine at most bookstalls. "FUTURISTIC STORIES" contains many gripping yarns from the pens of the above authors.

FUGITIVE ON VENUS

by LESLIE HALWORD



"FUGITIVE ON VENUS"

By Leslie Halward

The strident wailing siren over at Grunton Penitentiary sent a hideous prolonged signal into the foggy night. Armed guards manned the powerful searchlight mounted on the twenty foot wall, swivelled it expertly across the barren stretch of rocky ground leading to the hills. It revealed nothing—its brilliance was dimmed by the thickness of the fog before it.

The heavy iron gates clanged open and three pursuit cars loaded with guards roared out into the night. The siren continued to screech hideously, warning the solitary dwellers thereabouts that a dangerous man had escaped . . .

For Grunton Penitentiary contained only one kind of inmate—the homicidal maniac!

Bourbon's bid for freedom had been made with the reckless desperation and strength of the madman. He had feigned illness in his cell, and collapsed. He had been taken hastily to the room which served as hospital ward, and put to bed. Then, as the doctor had bent over him to administer a sedative, he had reached up and brutally strangled him.

The one guard at the door had been easy—he was dead now. From there it had been a simple matter to don his uniform, climb the steps to the observation tower on the wall, and knock the watcher there senseless. Armed with the man's gun he had risked the twenty foot leap—and had made it without injury.

At the prison they knew he must be still at hand. Hardly fifteen minutes had passed since he had been carried from his cell to the ward, so that his start could only have been a slight one.

Bourbon crouched by the foot of the thickly wooded hills, peering back and listening intently. Faintly muffled by the fog he could hear the whining of the escape siren, the higher tone of the car sirens, and the roar of the motors. A dim luminosity told him the searchlights were out too.

And then a new tone was added—one which sent chilling fingers coursing along his backbone.

The deep throated baying of a bloodhound! And not so far away from his present position!

He rose to his feet and turned, picking his way towards the steep path which led up the side of the hill. He plunged fearfully into the woods, staring before him with maniacal eyes,

shotgun tight in his hands.

The path led steeply upwards; he followed it, tripping now and then across tangled masses of long grass, and small irregular stones and rocks. Behind him the baying became more pronounced, nearer.

The light loomed up in the fog suddenly, startling him. He had not known there was a house high on that hill, but it certainly looked like it. The light came from a square aperture, possibly a window. It glowed against the grey swirling fog tendrils.

Bourbon paused and listened. His fingers twitched as he heard the sound of the hound again, behind. He knew the hound would be accompanied by grim, hard featured men with guns—men who knew the menace he constituted and would shoot him down without mercy rather than let him make good his escape.

Perhaps he could hide—the house . . .

He crept forward through the trees and approached the window.

The house itself was not impressive: it was a wooden building, following the style of a Mexican Hacienda. He fumbled for the steps which led to the verandah and found them. Wary of creaky boards he slunk along in the shadows of the overhanging boards, gained the window itself.

The window was slightly open at the bottom, and a gentle breeze stirred the net curtains so that he could see inside.

The room he saw was plain, without furniture of any kind. The walls were enamelled white, unrelieved by border or panel. The floor was covered with a clean piece of grey rubber.

Standing by the far wall, facing a shining metal contrivance, were two people—an aged, grey-haired man, and a pretty girl. The man was talking in low tones, but his words came quite clearly to Bourbon.

"It's finished, Lana—complete in every detail. It can't fail to work as I have planned."

"But dad," said the girl, "how can you prove it?"

"By trying it, my child. I shall advertise for a suitable man; one who would have the courage to face such an experiment. And there are many."

"But—are you sure it will work in reverse? Suppose it won't bring him back again?"

"It will—it must. Listen, Lana—I have already experimented with inanimate objects. They have returned . . . there is no Earthly reason why a living subject should not do so if he follows my instructions carefully. Provided he does not move from the spot at which he reassembles, he will be perfectly safe. I would try it myself but—I am the only one who can operate the beam. You'll see, Lana. I've devoted twenty years of my life, living here away from life itself, constructing this beam. It can be directed to any planet; at the moment it is focussed upon Venus. When the subject steps upon the plate in that cage, and I reverse this lever, his body is split into its tiny elements. These are transmitted along the beam to their preordained destination, no matter how far it may be. When they reach that point, the work of the beam transmitter is done. The object, whatever it may be, forms again. The process is reversed and the atomic structure assembled. This is the final step—once this experiment is completed I am ready to commercialise the invention. It will entirely replace shipping, air-freight and rail-carriage upon Earth. The heaviest goods can be transported clear across the world, clear across the Universe even, in split seconds. You realise the value of it, my child?"

"I think I do, father. But the thought of this experiment unnerves me. Why is it needed? You have already proved that the beam transmitter works efficiently on Earth. Can you not wait . . . ?"

He shook his head: "No, Lana. Like every scientist I have that burning curiosity to know what the other planets hold. What forms of life, what mineral wealth, whether there are any great civilisations there."

Listening outside the window, Bourbon tensed. The idea which had entered his mind almost made him reel. It was fantastic, and yet—he was prepared to clutch at any straw to elude recapture. Yes, even voluntary exile from the world he knew and hated. Even a nightmare experiment with his living body as the guinea pig!

The baying of the hound closer still confirmed his decision. He walked quickly round to the door, hammered upon it.

Waited. The door opened, and he confronted the girl. He said:

"I wish to see your father. At once, please."

The girl tried hard to distinguish him, but the fog made it impossible to see more than a dark outline. She said: "Will you come in, Mister . . . ?"

He stepped inside without giving his name. And as he swung the door shut behind him her eyes fell upon the dreaded uniform of Grunton

Penitentiary for the Homicidally Insane. Her red lips went wide for a scream . . .

"NO!" snarled Bourbon, whipping his shotgun from beneath his grey tunic. "Be quiet!"

She read the threat in his eyes, cut the scream off short. He went on quickly: "I am a desperate man. I will not stop at murder to achieve my ends. Tonight, already, two men have died by my hand, and I would not be averse to adding a woman to the score. Take me to your father—immediately!"

For a second she hesitated. From the laboratory her father called:

"What is it, Lana?"

"A—a gentleman to see you, father." She gagged over the word gentleman, and Bourbon noted it and smiled evilly.

"What? Here—at this time, in this fog? Very well, show him in to me."

She walked towards the lab., followed closely by the gun and the madman. She entered, and her father turned round from his machine . . .

Bourbon snarled: "Make no outcry. Should you do so I will not hesitate to kill your daughter. You understand?"

The scientist betrayed no alarm. He nodded and said: "I heard the escape siren going at Grunton. You are that man?"

"I am that man," agreed Bourbon. My name is Bourbon—John Bourbon."

"I remember your case—you roamed Chicago slashing people with knives, did you not?"

"Not people—women," pointed out Bourbon. "I am rather proud of my record. They called me a worse peril than Jack the Ripper. But unfortunately they apprehended me . . ."

"And judged you guilty but insane, and detained you in Grunton."

"I see you read your paper," said Bourbon. "But there is no time for discussion of that topic now. I need your aid . . ."

The old scientist smiled and shook his head: "You may expect no help from me, Bourbon," he said. "I can give you none as it is, and even if I could I would not."

Bourbon said: "Listen . . . do you hear?"

The ghostly baying of the bloodhound crept out of the fog into the room. Bourbon went on: "They are on my trail. Soon they will find me, and take me back. If that happens, I will leave behind me two bodies in this house . . . I need not mention names . . ."

"You dare not!"

"Why not? They cannot harm me other than lock me up. I am insane—so they say. You see? It matters nothing to me how many people I murder now."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then your daughter dies first, and you after her. But you will not refuse; I have a proposition to put to you."

The old man adjusted his spectacles calmly and moved closer.

Bourbon rapped: "Stay where you are for the moment. This is my offer: you will tell the guards, if they come here, that you have not seen me, that you do not know where I am. You will send them away . . ."

"And in return?"

"In return I will be your human guinea pig. I will submit myself to your experiment. You understand?"

The girl said, quickly: "No—no, father."

But the scientist's eyes were gleaming with interest. He said:

"Suppose they insist on searching the house?"

"Permit them. They will find nothing, for I will be gone."

"You mean that you are willing to undergo the experiment now, without further preparation?" he gasped.

Bourbon nodded. Lana said again: "Dad, you can't. You can't turn a maniac loose, not on any world—of course you can't . . . Dad!"

Her father looked at her, smiled. "Don't be alarmed, child. Venus is a young planet—I feel sure there can be no human life on it. If our friend wishes to find out, why not . . .?"

There was a shrewd look in his eyes. Bourbon didn't fail to see it there and wonder . . .

Naturally, he thought to himself, the old fool may know of some way of killing me, once he gets me on that plate! Perhaps that is his plan. Perhaps something will go wrong! Purposely . . .

The scientist said: "I agree, Bourbon."

He said it rather too quickly, in view of his daughter's protests. Bourbon was certain he meant to work some trick with his machine.

But he betrayed no sign of his knowledge. He moved towards the cage of platinum wire, stood upon the plate beneath him. He still held the girl by the shoulder, her back towards him.

There was a thunderous hammering upon the door: Bourbon rapped:

"How do I know you won't reverse this thing immediately the guards are here, and bring me back?"

"I wouldn't have time. The transmission is only the work of a few seconds. You will see me pull the lever, suffer a momentary blackout, and the next second you will find yourself on—Venus!"

Bourbon growled: "They're at the door. I'm ready . . ."

And he suddenly jerked the girl, Lana, roughly into the cage with him. Snapped: "So you won't try any funny tricks the girl goes with me, Professor. By all accounts she will be very useful on a planet which has no other women."

"You swine . . ." cried the scientist.

Bourbon grated: "Pull the lever! Pull it, or by God I'll shoot your daughter here and now . . . do you hear?"

His eyes blazed with savagery: he jammed the shotgun hard into the girl's spine so that she screamed with pain. He shouted: "PULL IT!"

And hopelessly the old man obeyed . . .

.

Bourbon was floating in a vast, inky dark void. He no longer had a body—what body there was of him had resolved itself into a hundred trillion tiny motes . . .

His thoughts were disjointed, unreal . . . like his body.

He did not know how long he had been like this; it might have been a second or all eternity . . .

And then his consciousness was blotted out by a blinding white flash—everything became burning, nerve shattering pain . . .

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Professor Systrom walked hopelessly along the hall towards the front door. The imperative hammering had risen in volume, until the stout oak shook beneath its weight. The bloodhounds bayed now with a sharper note. A man called: "Professor—open the door."

Systrom opened it and stood back as a bronzed young man of sturdy build pushed in. Behind him were three guards, armed, and pulling back on the leashes of the gaunt, man-hunting dogs.

The young man swung his shotgun under his arm on seeing Systrom alone. He said: "Man called Bourbon's escaped from the Pen. Thought he might have broken in here when you didn't answer at once. You haven't seen or heard anything—unusual?"

Systrom said: "Alec, I'm half mad myself. I don't know how to tell you this . . . but Lana . . . that lunatic . . . he's . . ."

Alec Caxton, the young Governor of Grunton, grasped his arm. Lana was his fiancée: the Professor's ominous words had shaken him badly: "Professor—what happened? You don't mean to say something has happened to Lana . . . not . . ."

Systrom said: "Alec, you know the line of my experiments have been taking. Well, tonight Bourbon burst in and forced me to send him out through the beam transmitter. I intended to swing the machine off course and send him out into the void—but at the last second he pulled Lana into the cage with him, and it was either a question of sending her with him or seeing her murdered there and then. I sent her . . ."

"Then she's . . ." Caxton broke off short, afraid to put his thoughts into words. Systrom said: "Yes, Alec. She's alone on Venus, facing Heaven knows what horrible perils."

Alone except for the worst peril of them all—John Bourbon!"

Alec seemed stunned; slowly he turned to the guards, said: "You can go back—I'll take care of Bourbon now."

"But . . ." protested one.

Caxton repeated, dully: "Go back."

He shut the door in the astonished faces of his men. Then he followed Systrom into the lab., stood staring at the shining machine.

At last he muttered: "Isn't there any way of getting them back?"

Systrom shook his head: "Only if they remain in the precise spot at which they alighted," he groaned. "I could keep the beam located on that point and keep the reverse lever down. I have already obtained one or two loose pieces of Venusian mineral that way."

"Then if you reverse the lever now?"

"I reversed it immediately. It was too late. They must have moved from the place almost at once."

Alec reflected a moment. Then said suddenly: "Professor, I'm going *after* them. Not so much because it's my duty to get Bourbon, but—well, Lana . . . can you send me up there?"

Systrom nodded: "I was hoping you would say that, my boy. I can't go myself since only I can operate the beam. But you . . . you *can*. If you find Lana and Bourbon, return to the spot at which you landed on Venus. I, for my part, will stay by the beam night and day until you return or—I fall dead. Take this . . ."

He handed Caxton a queerly shaped rifle. Said: "It may be very useful—if fires explosive bullets, and God knows what forms of life you may encounter there . . ." Caxton nodded and gripped the old man's hand silently. Then took his position upon the plate, in the cage . . .

CHAPTER TWO

Bourbon shook his head dazedly as the white flare about him began to fade.

His eyes functioned again, and memory returned—Grunton—the escape—house on the hill—Venus—LANA . . .

At once he realised he was holding her tightly still, the gun jammed hard into her back. And then he felt a great exultation as he knew the Professor's gadget *did* work: that wherever he was he was free, no longer pursued!

With that thought came caution: it crossed his mind what the scientist had said about reversing the lever to bring back anyone in the radius of the beam. And quickly he stepped to one side, dragging the girl with him, until he fancied he had moved far enough away from the original point to be safe.

Lana was still staring blankly at the weird landscape about them, not able to realise they

really were on Venus. Although she had never said so to her father, she was secretly inclined to amusement at his insistence that his machine was capable of sending people and things through space to any given point. Now it seemed he had been right—and that the beam had no limits!

She was glad for him—but the knowledge of her own horrible position weighed down upon her. She stole a glance at Bourbon from wide terrified eyes.

Bourbon smiled: "Ah, my dear. Beginning to take notice again, eh? Your father was not quite as mad as I had thought—I scarcely dared to hope his wild statements were correct—but any chance was worth while to me. A pleasant afterthought, was it not, to bring you along?"

He regarded her, released her, and stroked his heavy jowls with his free hand. He chuckled: "Yes, very attractive. Far more attractive than any of the women I—er—disposed of in Chicago. So very attractive, in fact, that I may be tempted to spare you—who knows? It will depend, of course, upon your behaviour whilst under my—er—protection!"

She covered her face with her hands and said nothing. Her body shook with muffled sobs. He continued pleasantly: "It's wonderful here, is it not? Our little Garden of Eden, eh? Ha, ha! Adam and Eve, all over again, my dear. And if your father is correct no one else on this entire planet who is like we are. Therefore we must get better acquainted as soon as possible—much better acquainted . . ."

She removed her hands from her face, composed again. She said:

"I hate you!"

It was a dangerous remark to make to Bourbon, and men like him. But fortunately for her he was revelling in his freedom, and was not without curiosity concerning this new found world. Therefore, apart from a slight narrowing of the eyes, and a fondling of the gun trigger, he did not display his anger. He said:

"In that case it is even more essential that we should know each other better. In time I have no doubt, you will come to accept me as the inevitable. Unfortunately I am uncertain just how much time I am prepared to allow you . . . we will see . . ."

She made a sudden rush towards the point at which they had landed. She was almost there when Bourbon reached her, caught her arm and twisted it cruelly behind her back.

This time he dragged her across the warm, moist, brilliantly green grass, until a good distance was between them and the means of return to Earth. He warned her: "Make another attempt, my dear, and I will be compelled to kill you here and now."

She made no reply. Bourbon now glanced round to examine his surroundings more fully.

What he saw was impressive, even to his distorted mind.

A hundred yards from where they stood, the greensward ceased abruptly, and gave place to flaring crimson plants with poppy-like heads fully three feet across. These extended in a carpet, unbroken, as far as the eye could see. One flaming crimson mass, like a royal carpet of welcome.

To the right, about a mile distant, a mighty forest reared into the vapour ridden sky. To the left could be seen a gigantic swamp of brown viscous liquid, which boiled and bubbled and cast steam and mist into the burning Venusian air. The sky itself was invisible to his eyes, the steaming atmosphere of the young world hid it effectively from view. But the mist and steam were golden-tinted by the rays of the Sun above, the heat which beat down was clammy and oppressive.

Bourbon said: "A charming place, although rather hot. Still, it will doubtless enable me to practise endurance, for the time when I will undoubtedly be going somewhere much hotter. And now we had best find sanctuary of sorts—are you ready to march, my dear Lana?"

There was no other course open to her: silently she obeyed the menace of the shotgun and climbed wearily to her feet from the grass where she had been sitting. With Bourbon slightly behind her she began to trek in the direction he indicated.

The vast, mysterious forest gradually became plainer.

It was a wonderland. Even from the distance they could see gaudy plumed birds whirling about the trees, flitting from branch to branch, and setting up a shrill piping. The leaves of the giant trees themselves were like aeroplane wings, coloured vividly, in every shade conceivable, and some which weren't.

They entered the forest, Bourbon remarking: "Now at last we really know what an Enchanted Forest looks like."

The greensward continued underfoot here, and there was little tangled vegetation. Majestic flowers clustered round the boles of the trees, of every shape and colour. A faint, sweet odour came from them, more exquisite than any known to Terrestrials.

As yet, other than the birds, they had seen no form of life. But Lana sensed something evil, something alive, in the forest itself. The feeling persisted, even when they had been walking into it for more than an hour. Every now and then a musty, dead odour would intrude upon the delightful fragrance of the blooms . . . and this appeared to emanate from clumps of coarse, sinewy plants, with long, convoluted stalks of a grey hue.

Bourbon, despite his unpleasant personality, was truly entranced by the forest. His gun trailed from his hand, and his eyes darted to

and fro delightedly, taking in the structure of each different variety of growth and tree. Madman though he was there was much of the poet and idealist in him, as there is in so many insane people.

He showed no sign of stopping, and not wishing to draw his attention on to herself any sooner than could be helped, Lana walked on, without speaking.

At last Bourbon began to feel thirst.

They were passing a small, joyously bubbling stream when he spoke for the first time since they had entered the forest. He said:

"Hum. The pangs of thirst begin to be annoying, my dear. I should hate to lose you, but I must ask you to be the first to partake of that water . . . do you mind?"

Numbly she obeyed. She didn't much care if the water poisoned her, brought her to a writhing agonised heap. Even that would be better than what she might expect from Bourbon!

Bourbon watched her drinking, then waited, waited until he was sure the crystal-like stream was having no ill effect upon her. Then he himself drank, deeply.

The water was no different to that found on Earth. It eased his parched throat and refreshed him for the journey again. He motioned to Lana to get to her feet, and she did so, although she was almost dropping from fatigue. The stress of events had told upon her, and her legs felt as if her weary mind could not propel them another step.

But darkness was creeping on them before Bourbon called a halt.

They were in a small glade, surrounded by trees, and the steamy air above was rapidly dulling as the Sun went down. Bourbon nodded to one of the trees: "We must attempt to find ourselves a cosy little nook aloft for tonight," he said. "Until we know more about the dangers we may expect to encounter on this planet. Later we can build ourselves a little home—won't that be delightful? A little love nest on the planet of love. Captivating isn't it?"

His good humour was so high that he cared little for the fact that she ignored his remarks pointedly. He told himself she would come round, women, any woman, needed the strength and help of a man on a strange world like this. In time she would grow to love him—or so he felt sure.

He would not have been very flattered had he been able to see into the girl's mind. For Lana welcomed his suggestion of taking sanctuary in the trees, mainly because it meant he would be unable to force his loathsome physical contact upon her. Wedged between the boughs they would hardly dare to stir, let alone struggle.

She watched him clamber agilely up the thick trunk of a nearby giant, taking his handholds

from the tiny sprouting branches which were plentiful. He gained the broad limbs on the lower terrace, and lodged himself into position.

For a moment she thought of running whilst he was unable to pursue . . . but the thought of being alone and helpless on Venus deterred her from that course; objectionable and dangerous as he was, Bourbon was at least preferable to the dreaded unknown.

She scrambled up after him, hoping her legs would hold out until she had reached security. Bourbon extended a hand and helped her to the branch beside him.

He talked as the Sun went altogether, and a sombre twilight crept over the forest. The twilight dulled into a purple dusk, and this remained. She could see him balanced in the crotch of the tree, gazing vaguely towards her in the dusk. He was a shadow, barely distinguishable against the dark trunk.

If she were to wait until he slept, then pushed him . . .

No, that would be as pointless as running from him. She would still be alone here. And so far he had not touched her, or tried to. Something might turn up . . . perhaps her father would contrive to follow them . . . she could, at least, hang on until the last moment. If the worst did come to the worst, she could always kill herself, or get Bourbon to do so by attacking him.

A sudden eerie noise in the darkness made her start. Then she relaxed, realising Bourbon was asleep and snoring. Her head dropped back along the bough she had wedged herself in and she too slept—her regular breathing denoted her sleep was untroubled by dreams.

And in the higher terraces of the trees above, three pairs of eyes peered down, watching, waiting . . .

Alec Caxton shook himself and stared round. It was difficult to believe that he was on Venus, so soon after leaving Earth. But he did not doubt it, strange as it was.

He was on another planet, armed with a peculiar weapon of the Professor's own invention, facing an exhausting search for a man and a girl.

The task seemed almost hopeless, but he refused to show any despair. At least Bourbon could not have gone far—he had not had the time. The first thing was to study the lie of the land.

He roamed round until he found a portion of high, rising land. He plodded up this, expending more energy than he had thought the climb would take. It sloped off about a hundred feet up, into flat tableland. He moved to each of the three sides in turn and stared.

The crimson plain—the boiling, bubbling swamp—the forest—the greensward—

The forest!

He did a double take and brought his eyes back to focus in that direction. Two mannikin-like figures were just vanishing into the leafy interior, and there could be no doubt that there went the two people he sought!

Even as he opened his mouth to call they had vanished.

He ran down the slope towards the forest, across the plain. He reached the edge of the trees panting with exertion and dripping with sweat. His heart was pumping furiously, his head was heavy. It was far too hot to run any great distance on Venus, he found. If he kept this up he would be in no condition to battle Bourbon when at last they did meet.

He slowed down, and entered the trees at a quick walking pace.

Several times he paused to listen, but there was no sound other than the popping of the gaudy little birds, and the humming of their rapidly moving bodies and wings.

Now he began to see how hopeless it would be to find anyone in that maze. Worse, in fact, than the plain, although he had seen the point at which they had entered, and had noted it. For the greensward was a moss-like substance, which sprang to its original position the second his feet had left it. That meant there were no trails left for him to follow. No clues to indicate the direction in which his fiancée and Bourbon had gone.

He tramped on gamely, however. Now he must trust to luck. Nothing else could serve him. Preoccupied as he was, he failed to detect the evil quality about the grey plants, which Lana had noticed earlier. He had not consciously noticed them at all.

Therefore he had no idea, when he leaned against one of these for rest, that there might be danger . . .

It was brought home to him suddenly; his hand, resting upon a bunch of slender grey stalks of a rubbery quality, was suddenly encircled!

He experienced an unpleasant sensation, a pricking and a drawing about the flesh round which the stems of the plant had coiled. He jerked the arm . . .

The arm came forward—and so did the tentacles!

The mass next to his body began to undulate slowly . . .

With a curse of alarm he started away—and the tentacular stems which had stealthily coiled about his legs, brought him down with a crash.

Genuinely afraid now, he fought desperately to break the grip of the stinging plant. The more he struggled, the more the stems twined over him, and he became aware of a warm tendril winding tightly about his throat . . .

Then his eyes caught the gun, lying at hand where he had dropped it. He reached out with

the hand which was yet free dragged it to him, and sought to bring it into position to level it at the world's natural product of the young planet.

He leveled at the centre of the thick grey mass from which the stems sprang, pulled the trigger. Nothing.

The gun was noiseless, but effective.

A gaping hole was torn in the greyness—a pause of a half second, and then a small, muffled explosion.

The plant ripped asunder before his eyes scattering snabs of fungus-like stuff over his hauses and face. And he recoiled in sheer horror as they oozed red blood on to his clothing.

The tendrils about his body had suddenly become limp and lax. He tore them off in handfuls. Where they had gripped the skin was marked red and raw, and tiny globules of his blood bore witness to the fact that the plant was a vegetable Vampire.

The Vampire Plant of Venus.

He staggered again, and suddenly his eyes were drawn to a small bird which had settled upon a similar plant a short distance away. It perched a few inches above the depending dangle, piping away and preening itself.

He gazed, fascinated, as yet other stems stole up behind it from the parent body as they finished above its head, and with it.

The bird suddenly piped a high note, flew upwards straight at the waiting trap. As rapidly as a snake striking the tail of a lamped about it. More shot out from the bird was coaxed into a grey mass of sticks, until its piping became feeble and gradually died altogether in a low purr-like way.

The plant undulated slowly. The tentacles cramped tighter. Then they opened again, and a small, mere empty shell was thrown out from the plant.

As Alec became conscious of the masty odour surrounding the Vampire plants, and wrinkled his nose in disgust as he realised it was merely the decomposing odour of their drained victims, of which he would have been sure, except for the foresight of Nyström in putting him through the experience.

He turned away and recommenced his trek across the desert. Bourbon was entirely lost his sense of direction. He had no idea whether he was going right or wrong.

The trees reared up either side of him almost silently. The twilight descended suddenly, without warning, and was followed by the purple dusk. Still he tramped on.

At length he halted. What was the use of going further? Best to wait until daylight, and he could then see about it. For all he knew he could have passed quite close to them in this darkness and not seen them save

as shadowy outlines which he could have put down as plants.

He had not known that he had passed the two almost a mile back. He advanced through the trees, climbed a tree and slept. From above eyes watched him also.

CHAPTER THREE

Bourbon yawned and blinked his eyes open slowly. He stared about him, realised it was some minutes before his memory returned to him, and remembered how and where he had come to be in the midst of this tropical forest sleeping in a tree-orchard.

But as he remembered, he stared towards the branch on which the green leaves lay the previous night, and then uttered a loud curse and started to his feet.

Lana was gone!

But where? And how?

And how was he to find her again on a plain with a diameter of 7,000 miles?

He raised his head, scanned his track from the rays of the sun which filtered softly through the canopy above him, and was forced to overhang the plant. His position being second nearest the Sun meant that it received almost twice the amount of heat that a fourth. Furthermore it was constantly being scorched by the sun's rays, and the acts of steam and fire from swamps, rivers, lakes, and burning ground.

And somewhere was the girl he had come to accompany him. He didn't know, but he would have changed his mind long ago if he had known a strange word. But apparently he had not of the known had a last married her and of the unknown, and she had been at least what he thought.

And then he noticed that he had the girl gone, and also the sun.

A feeling of despair came at her. Admittedly a far better one than nothing, occasion any day the sun was not only more than was able to come up against trouble, and at the same time he was able to face the possibility.

But he realised that he could not find the girl, and he was in a position to do so, and he was not to be given to the ground and started forward slowly.

He tramped on and on, and the heavy canopy of heat, the trees and flowers and green grass seemed to surround him, and the settled moisture in the air was a strain towards the sky. His rest had been a waste to him for he had suggested a heavy weight of energy or purpose. What purpose could he have here? There was life and death, but no chance to find some safe spot to stay.

The pangs of hunger began to assail him, his stomach felt empty and hot, and his mouth

dragging the coracle with him until it grounded upon a sandbar. She was pushed through it and then it was pushed on one side. The Venusians crowded to the bank, prodded her with the air machines. The birds whirled about with raucous cries. A few cut across the water toward her some seconds later. They were more pigeons.

She floated gently on the sea, swim toward the shore, and then, propelling herself with her arms, she moved on to the black sand. She was rather tired, rather than frightened. Lana guessed that they had been taken out of the water purposefully. It was not a pleasant thought. She expected to see some one to carry her captured prey, but when they were borne.

The water was still and pale, streaming slightly toward the shore. Lana lay back on the sand, but then tried to pull her arm free. It was impossible.

As then she gazed back towards the shore, she made out a small figure standing late at the water's edge, and very slowly, as the water itself, came an echoing cry.

Lana.

She stood up so that the coracle almost covered her.

Alec! Alec!

For a moment there was Alec, standing helplessly, but then a huge shadow loomed over the distance to rescue her. He turned a tail, snatched her up, and then, by his looks, showed that he needed no further aid. She knew that the bottom of the heart had given way to a more solid thing. Alec had come after her. It was either way into captivity or face a fatal danger, even death, as far as she knew.

Bourbon crouched back behind the trees which concealed him from the view of the Venusians who were now near Lana. He watched a while, then moved forward and prodded and thrust a sign of relief when at length they moved her captive away into the forest. He allowed them to attempt the girl's escape.

He stayed where he was, afraid that they might have left some of their number about. They were the shaggy wild men, and he hoped that they would not make it was known.

For minutes passed and Bourbon was about to take the risk and move into the open, when he saw a Venusian approaching the clearing. He remained where he was, peering toward the trail along which he had come, wondering what fresh danger was to be revealed to his eyes. And into the clearing stepped Alec Caxton, the Governor of Granton!

It took Bourbon only a moment to realize Caxton had followed him to Venus. Here could be no other explanation. As Caxton paused in front of the great water, Bourbon, the mariac, saw the man's face, his hands, and began to move. He moved the body, his fingers made to draw a struggle the unsuspecting man!

Alec Caxton, tramping onward through the Venusian forest, passed at a distance as he heard the far-off grating voices. As they reached the water, Bourbon and Lana, he hoped, perhaps, they were a try after the winning party.

He pushed his path. He had since discarded his clothing except his boots. He found the ground most pleasant walking to the feet.

The walking had stopped by the time he burst out into a small glade. There was nothing adequate which could be responsible for it had been. He had a large tree and considered that at that moment a brutal pair of hands gripped his throat from behind in a cruel stranglehold.

CHAPTER FOUR

Alec struggled nervously against the grip about his neck, but Bourbon's insanity lent him the strength to hold the attack. The young Governor. The explanation had fallen to the ground and lay in pieces for the moment. What Bourbon exerted his enormous pressure on the other man's neck, and heard with satisfaction, the grim sound which told him Caxton was choking rapidly.

But unknown to Bourbon other eyes were watching, and as Alec sagged forward and fell and Bourbon accompanied him, then, turning his grim work, a little bronze figure dropped lightly from a high perch on the tree below which Bourbon had hidden, wrenched a rough sword from its belt, and coolly ran Bourbon through on the heart line.

The mariac screamed shrilly and then rolled over, lifeless. It had been a neat, practised stroke.

The bronzed Venusian gazed down upon Caxton who was writhing and gasping for air, sucking in gasps which seared his tortured throat. He slid the sword behind his belt again and squatted down to wait for the Terrestrial to return to full awareness.

Caxton regained his faculties slowly. He had been very close to death, and it was some time before the cloudy grey mists which had risen about him cleared from his vision. Then he sat up and felt his throat tenderly. His eyes fell first upon the dead Bourbon, and he gasped

from the sea to a mottling above and about
the horizon and became land.

He was... For
the... steer our way
with... given.

Suppose the boat... night?"
suggested Alec.

How can... There... and no...

Alec was apt to forget the absence of tide.
The fact that Venus had no water to exert a
tidal pull... escaped him.

They sailed down for the night in the boat,
not needing to save themselves or the surface
of Venus ever grown old. The... dark-
ness... everything a darkness whose
purple effect was due to faint... charged
vapours which rose from the planet.

But slept Gaygel somewhat uneasily so far
from land. Alec dog tired by his strenuous
rowing.

The night wore on, and as the Sun charged
the Heaven with the first flush of dawn Gaygel
was awake and... his companion.

At last... the... with... an-
toward... Gaygel... now
grasped the essentials of... and took
his turn at... his... sending
the boat rapidly on its... his mind
ever alert as... the... At
last... came into
sight... bearings.

They... of our journey," he
explained... the... to the
safety of this land... the Sun.

... were... island working
silently... direction.

No, the... large.

Alec seemed that must mean it was a contin-
ent. Gaygel seemed quite certain of himself,
and what... where he had obtained his
knowledge... of the forest dwellers
were savers... say it had been handed
down from generation to generation.

Once more they left land behind, and headed
into... the Venusian sea.

And then far away on the horizon a large
grey... the air became visible.
Gaygel frowned and stared hard. Alec queried.

What is and?

Gaygel shook his head, and his face was
...ed.

No. This is such a storm as I have men-
tioned to you. We can but hope it will pass
us by...t.

He left his remark unbrushed, but Alec could
guess the implication behind his words.

Steadily the grey... grew nearer and now
a roaring noise began... Alec the sight
of typhoons... other raging Earthly storms, but this was
unlike anything known to Earth. It bore down

swifly... and with... of
... were...

They... the...
changes. A...
the...
where...
but... ..

They... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

When... food and the two...
... and Alec had...
one... when he...
caves, and... Gaygel's...
they were... under the...
of the waters.

They... again...
was almost ashy grey despite...
legs and arms...
above... the boat...
down a few... away. Above the...
voice of the wind Alec...ed.

Quickly... the... .

He... the... and...
grasped... and followed...
were... and...
drenched...
storm... as it had...
were... again...
but... ..

Only... remained to... the
storm had passed that way, and...
together they... righted...
climbed... the... were...
flood. At that... were...
one... and the...
of

Gaygel... his head...
hands and... ..

But Alec was... working on the...
of the boat, wrenching the...
from their... and... that at
least they would be... ..

He handed one to Gaygel who shook his
head.

It is no use, Allek. The storm...
us... our course. I do not know...
angle at which we must travel.

We must try, said Alec, driving away with
his seat. At least we cannot say we're to
perish.

Gaygel saw the sense of that and together
they commenced to row swiftly, ignoring the
extra exertion of wielding the heavy seats.

Lana paced restlessly up and down the
chamber in which she was held captive.

How long she had row... the...
could not reckon. Days...
had lost count after the twenty...
knew only that many more had since... ..

batter each other down as rapidly as possible or be themselves battered down

Lana sickened as the blood spouted from gaping wounds and turned away. But her eyes were dragged back again—there was a horrible fascination about the way they fought, silently without cries, even when they were mortally injured.

At last ten of them lay dead and dying in the bloody space, and the victors raised their swords towards the lake and shouted in chorus.

The priest produced a bone horn from a leathery pouch, blew upon it, producing a high pitched, summoning note.

The waters of the lake swirled, and a frightful head appeared!

Unable to control herself, Lana screamed shrilly.

CHAPTER SIX

The creature was a terrifying, prehistoric nightmare, from the dawn of life.

Only the neck and head were visible, but those were sufficient. The neck sheered from the water to an appalling height, and along the back ran a row of bony spurs, terminating in a horn on top of the head itself. The head was small in proportion to the neck, and was shaped similarly to the head of a snake. The eyes were tiny and sunk in swollen flesh, and the nostrils cavernous and gaping. The skin was wrinkled hideously, hanging in loose grey folds round the gaping slavering jaws, with the sharp fangs.

A ridiculously high pitched hissing sound came from the two red maws of the nightmare, and the head poised for a brief instant, whilst the crowd dropped to their knees and sent up a wailing chorus.

Then the head darted forward at a lightning-speed, one of the wounded fish men was seized in cruel teeth and borne aloft. Head, victim and all, disappeared beneath the surface, and there was a confused flurry of water.

A furious red stain spread above the spot, and a torn and mangled portion of flesh floated to the top.

The crowd wailed again, and Lana tried desperately not to be sick.

Minutes passed, and the sea serpent reappeared. The wounded man who lay at its mercy showed no fear, slowly, they waited, as the red and white watering their comrades being dragged to death with agonising eyes.

Once the sea serpent reared to waist level, seized the man, and took them beneath the surface to finish its bloody work there. Above there remained nothing but the blood-stained bank of sand to show where ten men had perished mysteriously.

The High Priest uttered some words, and spoke to Lana. The sea serpent apparently accustomed to the ritual, made no effort to

attack the rest of the throng. It remained with its head above water, gazing evenly towards the bank, and swaying from side to side.

Lana struck from the priest as he took her shoulder.

But her hands were still bound, and there was nothing she could do to avert the fate which she was sure awaited her. She knew now that she was a sacrifice—knew the reason for the dainty abed necklaces for her ring captivity. It had all been leading to this day, to this very moment, to this loathsome monster from some Venusian nightmare and its foul, blood-stained jaws.

The priest motioned to the men who had brought her, and she felt rope being thrown about her legs and tightened. A tug and she fell helplessly to the bank.

The serpent sent out a red, questing tongue, like a whip, licking round its snaky mouth. Lana shuddered.

The priest began to chant again, standing over her with raised arms as the moment of sacrifice drew near.

The serpent swooped beneath the surface momentarily.

The two guards picked Lana up by her feet and shoulders, hurried her to the edge of the lake, laid her down upon the long, red blood sacrificial platform.

She lay tall and tense, her mind a numbness, her eyes riveted to the spot from which the serpent was due to appear.

The chanting ceased, the priest brought out the horn again, blew a sharp note.

The serpent swayed and reared, reared its head high into the air, and swooped towards her.

Alec Caxton stared himself, licked dry lips with his tongue and pulled himself to the gunwale of the boat.

The storm had passed, but no sign of rain had they encountered. For hours they had paddled with the seats, but at last fatigue, thirst and hunger had taken their toll. Gaygel had been the first to collapse, now he lay in the bottom of the boat, semi-conscious. Alec had not been long after him, and he too lay motionless for hours whilst the Sun steamed the water about them, and blistered his bare skin which was unused to such heat.

The sea water Gaygel had given him to understand, was not drinkable. It was like that of Terra, salty.

The boat had ceased to move, and with it had ceased the rescue mission of its occupants. All was still, after a time, but could be heard to see, but the thick vapour rising from the water.

Gradually the Sun went down, bringing relief to the two wearied travellers. Alec found the

attends to him, himself to the war and to poor
one with it with hope

Yes, you can see the lion with the gazelle
in the park at night.

the general appearance, then forced himself into a sitting position. He even blinked. The doctor, Al's sister, took his hand.

So far, we saw a flat surface of humps
rise from the water. It was now lying so low
that it was actually beneath the
surface. The water was LAND.

"Not only
and at the we are seeking the descrip-
tion of the Krans.
We must go on now we must wait
for work."

They sank into the boat but now their
ropes were hatched again and they felt refreshed
and all. While there was no there would
be food and the means of quenching their
thirst, and after that they could continue their
uninterrupted travel.

And as the purple dusk enveloped them
one of them began to patter silently towards the
low stone walls which were the sterns of the
Klondike boats.

A _____ call _____ was essential as Gaygel
so _____ was hard to hear the fish men when they
_____ _____ _____ he told they
_____ _____ _____

... and with
... of ...
... their
... and
... then on

For the first time, the FBI has been able to put the pieces of the puzzle together. The investigation has led to the capture of a number of individuals who were involved in the attack. The FBI is now working to identify the individuals who were involved in the attack and to bring them to justice.

and as he had said, a number of fruit trees, of the variety that was then served as a treat to the guests. The two each took a tree, turned and attempted to get a rough estimate of how far they were from the forest.

... We must not be here
... We must
... We must

Time	Location	Remarks
10:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
10:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
10:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
10:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
11:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
11:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
11:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
11:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
12:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
12:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
12:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
12:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
13:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
13:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
13:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
13:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
14:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
14:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
14:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
14:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
15:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
15:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
15:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
15:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
16:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
16:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
16:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
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22:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
23:00	1000 ft	1000 ft
23:15	1000 ft	1000 ft
23:30	1000 ft	1000 ft
23:45	1000 ft	1000 ft
24:00	1000 ft	1000 ft

I am not a proponent of Gay-
 world, as we have heard in the
 last week's episode. In fact, we may

I saw them [redacted] Screen-
ing at [redacted] territory in the
[redacted]. They were surrounded and
[redacted] they would
[redacted]

Creeping over pitted rocks and through three foot deep pools of water they tramped farther into the scrub. The water persisted even after they had covered a good hundred yards, and Alec began to see that the entire island might be water-logged in this way.

At length they located a rack of reasonable proportions, which was tilted steeply over, forming a small cave. Into this they crept, and remained there shivering.

They were waist deep in the churning sea and uncomfortable and miserable. Their task seemed impossible or at least, more so now that they were actually at their destination and knew they were two days overdue by the use of engines.

Fortunately their stupor was broken by
hearing to restore that the bodies and now
they had eaten and reasoned that for the
were able to face the hours ahead, until
with more equanimity. The night dragged
slowly on.

The dawn came, finding him low-eyed and weary, but ready for a new start. And had unwrapped the roll to see the water-proof leaves and was inspecting

Even articles to the Navy must make every one of these things. What if we are

Guyge was pointing towards a direction of shell buildings near road. That is a village we said. If you start your eyes you will be able to see the houses pointing out at the opposite end to us. You see them. They go in body.

'They go to the games.' Gabyel informed her. 'We must follow them some day.'

They kept the controls at 100 and started to slide down, taking advantage of the small ice racks and went to the full. "It was a real loss of progress was not quick enough," At last Gayger said. "They are getting out of sight we must keep a hand on the tow line rapidly or we shall lose it."

They rose to their feet and hurried out the
 party. As they progressed they argued no more
 altogether and kept their eyes fixed on the
 distant lights anxious to keep their sight.

It was the first time I had ever seen a woman so young and so beautiful. She was smiling and looking at me with a friendly expression. I felt a little shy at first, but she was so kind and gentle that I soon felt at ease. We talked for a while and she told me about her life and her work. I was very interested in what she had to say and we had a very pleasant conversation. She was a very nice person and I enjoyed meeting her. We both laughed and had a good time. I was glad to have met her and I was sure that we would be friends for a long time.

The Khan here gave me the singing
his sword and his bow. I bowed
to him and then we went
from the Khan's tent to
a half-sunrise and a half-moon
We were there

W. S. K. Ichna, reported (Leydel) '012

whom your fellows fight at the gate here. She is full of skin and dressed in a strange fashion.

"Come in, see what she is, or the captain will be angry. You must come here. You will be killed. I will kill you."

"Yes, my try, said Gaygel calmly."

The kran sighed. "They are coming in with their swords drawn. Gaygel backed a step and parried as he knew how. Caxton marvelled at his severity with the unwieldy weapon and watched admiringly as the sword circled and swung, stopping he would have killed her."

Gaygel seeing that his had gone on long enough, stepped back three paces. The kran rushed forward under the impression his enemy was retreating and Gaygel stepped swiftly aside and drove his blade through the body of the other.

The kran struck through the heart, dropped instantly, and Gaygel wiped his blade on the man's thigh and slid his sword back into his belt.

"Now we have lost the party through this fool," he snapped.

As he said the party was gone from sight. Alec said, "We can but follow the same direction and trust to luck, possibly we will see others."

But they saw no more of the krans as they continued, and time was passing so quickly that Alec was beginning to get afraid—afraid they would even now be too late.

Gayge also was looking miserable as he noticed his friend's downheartedness. And finally he said, "It is of no use walking on blindly. We must find a village enter it and question one of those too old to attend the games at the sworn point. Do you agree?"

Alec agreed readily and they posted on until they beheld the shimmering multi-coloured patterns of a village in the distance. They exercised care in approaching but it was silent and deserted. Presumably the krans were convinced they had nothing to fear in their own stronghold, at least the one he had gone to the games to see the strange white girl sacrificed and to worship at the altar of their God.

Gaygel and Alec trod down the street silently, prepared to face any who might remain. The place was still and quiet, so that when they heard breathing in one of the buildings it was loudly and hoarsely wheezy chest breathing.

They flung open the door and rushed into the room. An old woman was seated upon a wicker chair, wheezing and coughing. Her eyes were so far sunken into her cheeks as to be invisible at a casual glance and her withered breasts sagged against her wrinkled flesh.

Gaygel had no respect for the aged and infirm. Death on Venus lurked at every corner and the average life span was incredibly short. From what Gaygel had told him, Alec had computed

that the old woman was at least a hundred years old. A very passing, this age, and she had lived a long life. She was not to be feared. "My dear," she said, "I am not to be feared."

Gayge pressed the old woman's breast and snapped, "We wish you to reply to our questions. Do you understand?"

The old woman coughed and said, "I was too old to be killed or afraid."

Gaygel continued, "How far we reach the place at which the games take place?"

She considered deeply. She said, "The flat of the Sea God."

"Is there any other?"

"No."

"Then how may we reach the altar?"

She shook with cackling, ancient laughter.

"Answer, old woman, or I kill," snapped Gaygel.

"Why should I answer?" she whined. "I am not afraid to die. Why do you want to know where the games take place?"

"That is none of your business. Answer or I will kill."

Now then, I have not much longer now to live."

Gaygel raised his sword savagely, drew it back. But Caxton laid a detaining hand upon his arm.

"Do not kill her, Gaygel."

"But why not? She refuses to answer."

"That may be—but upon Earth we do not kill old women."

Gaygel looked nonplussed and said, "She is my enemy. They are all our enemies. Doubtless this very crone has begat some of those dogs who now prey upon our people and over Venus."

The old woman had been inspecting Caxton closely during this dialogue and now she said, "You are not of his kind. What do you do here?"

"I come from afar," stated Caxton, "seeking one who was taken from me. A girl, who is my mate."

The old crone nodded. "You are kind, and although I do not understand you, I will tell you that which you wish to know if you think you can prevail against my countrymen."

Caxton bent eagerly towards her.

"He put me to the door," she waffled.

Gaygel on one side, Caxton on the other, they got her as far as the door. Here she pointed along the road with a bony finger.

"It is straight on— you must not turn or halt. Continue from here in a straight line, and you will find the lake and the altar."

Then she took a fit of coughing, and they took her back and sat her down. As they moved hurriedly away up the street they could hear her still at it.

"How do we know she was not lying?" questioned Gaygel.

"I don't think she was. Apparently she thinks that we are going to certain death any

way and is not averse to speeding our ends.

I do not see she is right," said Gaygel with a grin. "We shall see."

At that they started on their trotting and the new took splashing in and out of the water heedlessly.

Suddenly Gaygel halted his sensitive ears at the sound.

"Hear?"

A moment later and heard it too faintly. A faint sound and coming in the distance. Then a sudden change. A still more howl on a far more plaintive howl, and the scream of a woman, as if she had lost the sense of LANA!

He started, and so much so that even Gaygel was strained to hold his place. They were on a high jump of fruit trees as the horn sounded, and then came LANA. And then they

lost sight of a stretch of water and stared across. Over the far side, on a low wall of stone, a semi-naked boy and girl lay with frightened faces. Plopped above, or ready to swoop, was a monstrous sea serpent. With a roar Ate threw the rifle to his shoulder and took quick aim.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Fascinated with horror at the idea of being seen in those great gnawing jaws and torn to pieces under water with sharp teeth, Lana stared at the umbratile screen. And then

For no apparent reason the sea-giant's neck of the monster was sheered off at the water line. It was as if the base of the neck had burst with a puff of smoke, and the organ above water sprang simply to the surface with thing ending in a jerk.

There was a mighty thrashing beneath the lake as the serpent's body entered its death brook. A long superstitious howl of fear rose from the natives.

As the sea-giant could remember the Sea God had ruled the land from that point. It was their religion, and as he came as boy to them as the God of the Sea to Father. And now the Sea God was destroyed at one with a mighty gun, and they were all staring at the water, and the water in the waves which rippled there in the interior of the Sea God's final struggles.

They were the people, and more that were they had not observed the two men on the horse. Or would they have ascribed the trouble to them had they done so. It was an explanation, and an act for some purpose.

So they stood, and then from the High Priest who was the first came a sudden shriek which was as if it had been as his own. It was a cry of the fragments of the mesmerised fish mer. There was a fresh outburst of wailing.

A puff of smoke suddenly appeared in the

front ranks of the spectators. Some men had badly missed. Some flowed in, and some flew. Some were exposed to the air, and some were inspired weeping. Some at the end of the line inspired away. When the death was coming, they were the first to see that the serpent was the sea-giant, and the front ranks of the spectators were the first to push that way back, screaming and crying.

Then at the end of the line, and the sea-giant was happening properly. They were attempting to push their way back to the front. And against the new struggle swayed and followed back were the sea-giant. Ate used his rifle to good effect, and the sea-giant of the ranks of the serpent was stopped.

The struggling mass broke and ran. Every male and female were stretched away in full flight, leaving only the dead and long and winding and long. They stretched down towards the village, forced for their houses, slammed the doors, and asked themselves in as best they could.

Lana was the first when she saw the sea-giant. She was the first to see the suddenness of it all. Her heart, and her throat as she saw the two figures racing toward the lake, and reaching one of them for Ate.

Within seconds that had reached her side and glancing the arrows of the injured knelt and answered her. Lana gasped.

"I am Ate. I am Ate."

"Save it, Ate. Let it be. First we have to get out of this then we can find time to talk."

He turned to Gaygel and to Ate.

"The city is quiet," said Gaygel. "But how long that terror will be, and how uncertain. Our best plan would be to catch three of their flying birds and escape on them."

But while they take us back to the main point.

Easy. They travel at terrific speed, and are goaded into it. I have never handled one myself, but I have watched the Krans riding them. It is a very easy thing to do. A job to a right and a left, and a right and a left. A job to the neck makes them rise up on the side wings, and then they are very tame and very easy to handle. The Krans have tamed them themselves and are as tame as a domesticated horse. They fly long distances without food or water, and will compass the journey which took us days in a matter of hours.

Ate glanced carefully at Lana. "Thank you could you tell me?"

"I think so, Ate. I have a ready born up on one."

"Right, Gaygel. We go as you say. But where will we find them?"

Gaygel pointed to the left. "As we were coming I heard their squawking from that direction. Possibly there is a pen of them."

He ... Alec ... They ... Now we ... Alec ...

... she ...

... If ...

... How ...

... He ...

... She ...

They were ...

Then ...

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He drew ...

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Gayge ...

They ...

No ...

And ...

Very little ...

I think ...

They are ...

It seems ...

I think ...

I ...

Lana ...

When ...

"This ...

The ...

is nowhere reasonably safe to rest until the sun
light returns. In the darkness I would lose
my way and would wander into the quicksands
which abound."

Alec said, "We're in your hands, Gaygel.
You know best."

Gaygel nodded and cast about him. At
length he decided on a raised ramp of rock
which stood some fifteen feet above the marsh
land used. He indicated this and the three
tired adventurers walked over, squelching
through mud and water and made themselves
as comfortable on it as conditions would permit.

The purple dusk stole across the land and
gradually they fell into a sleep, only Gaygel
remaining awake and watchful. He smiled,
a kindly smile, as he noticed Lana huddled in
Alec's arms and wondered if his friend would
ever get back to Earth. If not, thought Gaygel,
they could live with him in the forest.

Hours had passed and his nostrils wrinkled
suddenly as a queer odour assailed them. Then
he jumped excitedly to his feet . . .

CHAPTER EIGHT

It was a ghastly, sickly, sweet smell that
Gaygel became conscious of, and he at once
shook his two companions by the shoulders.

Alec rubbed sleepy eyes and yawned. Lana,
a lighter sleeper, was awake almost at the first
touch.

"Quickly," breathed Gaygel. "We must
move on—at once."

Alec grunted and stirred himself, then peered
at the purple darkness.

"What the heck! It isn't dawn yet!"

"We cannot wait for dawn. We must take
our chance in the swamp, at least until we get
clear of this."

"This? What?"

"Can you not smell it?" questioned Gaygel.

Alec smiled. "Why, yes, now you mention
it I can. A sickly kind of smell. What is
it?"

"The red Mengas," explained Gaygel, and
Alec shook his head and smiled. "What's that?
Something to eat?"

"No. Something which means death for all
of us if we do not escape from its radius of
influence at once."

"What is it, Alec?" asked Lana as they
climbed to their feet.

"Just another little Venusian pleasantry,
darling," granted Alec. "Don't worry about
a thing. Gaygel has everything under control.
I hope."

Gaygel looked at him enquiringly. Alec
said, "Lana wants to know what we're up
against exactly, Gaygel."

Gaygel nodded. "It is perhaps the worst peril
of all. On one side of this marsh there is a

vast forest of red Mengas. They are a very
large, and very beautiful flower.

Alec said, "I think I saw them when I
arrived. Stretch them a little, don't they?"

Gaygel nodded. "They do not bloom properly
until it is night," he explained. "But later,
when they open fully they release a fatal gas—
many of my tribesmen have perished under it.
No man can survive it for more than fifteen
minutes and even ten minutes of exposure
seriously affects him, making him quite useless.
We punish our thieves and murderers by driv-
ing them into it at night; if they are found
safely they are pardoned. But as yet no one
has ever been pardoned. No one has crossed."

"But there isn't any forest of Mengas here,"
expostulated Alec. "Not in the marsh."

"No. But somewhere about there must be
an odd plant growing, and this is it, in bloom
and giving off poisonous vapours. Even one
plant's suffice to do a great deal of damage
if inhaled long enough. Fortunately I detected
the odour the moment it arose. That is why
we must make haste."

Alec helped Lana slide off the rock, said
"Heck, Gaygel, what other botanical mania-
strophies have you got on Venus?"

"There are many," replied the Venusian.

In the heart of this swamp there are
plants which were I to describe their qualities
to you, would make you shudder.

"I'm shuddering already," Alec retorted.

They started walking again, following Gaygel.
By the time they got out of range of the deadly
plant their heads were swimming a little and
they halted to rest. Gaygel said, "It is well
that I remained awake. Another fifteen
minutes of exposure and none of us would have
been capable of moving."

They found a fresh anchorage shortly, but
Alec and Lana also remained awake this time.
Their appetite for sleep had been briefly taken
away. The three sat round in a group talk-
ing, with Alec acting as interpreter for Gaygel,
could not understand the English words he had
been taught when they were spoken by the
high voice of a woman. Indeed, it appeared
to grate on his nerves when Lana spoke at all,
and Alec said, "Can't you stand the sound of
a female voice, Gaygel?"

Gaygel shook his head. "I can stand it,
Alekk, but it jars upon my nerves. It is the
clear high tone I think. Here we all speak in
exactly the same tone."

"You're lucky you aren't on Earth," Alec
grinned. "There the women do all the talking.
Never give it a rest from morning to night."

Gaygel looked surprised. "And do the men
allow it?"

"They can't help it. Can't get a word in
edgewise."

"Then," pointed out Gaygel, reasonably

"MARY HAD A LITTLE?"

By N. Wesley Firth

(And everywhere that Mary went the . . . was sure to go. It was exactly like the . . . only it wasn't a lamb that Mary had. In fact it wasn't quite . . . what it was.)

CHAPTER ONE

NOW I'VE SEEN EVERYTHING!

I was prepared to see something screwy up at Doc Chester's place. There always was something screwy there even if it was only the Doc himself. I read it was Doc Chester was a . . . for inventing things any kind of things from patent mouse traps which cost a lot of money for each mouse they caught to . . . for lifting bread which took the . . . as if you did not the loaf without being saw.

I expected to catch up the Mad Magician of Mississippi and though he might not have been precisely sane he certainly was a little screwy!

Times had used me to test some of his more . . . contrivances were beyond count. I'd have to admit to be subjected to buffings, . . . and punchings in order to see if one of his . . . was working right. I'd submit myself to being put in a bath of water to . . . and in the next thing to zero and . . . other things I'd also permitted a mad dog to bite me on the . . . I wouldn't get hysterical because the new . . . he'd . . . up a The result was I HAD got

You may wonder why I stood for all this, and that being so I suppose I'd better tell you. It was because of Mary.

I guess you guys would have stood for plenty even if you had a girl like Mary crazy as if you She was the . . . and she worshipped the old boy in spite of his screwy . . . or maybe perhaps because of them.

Yes, Mary was sure a peach as peaches go, and Doc didn't go any better than Mary.

I when the Doc asked me to . . . experiments but Mary had which and say WANTED to stop the progress and when he looked at me started opening her pretty mouth to say I couldn't bother to call again, I was sunk.

Well, I was saying this time I'd just got over that and was going along to see Mary the first time in two weeks. I was pretty sure some new invention would be waiting for me to step

in as a guinea pig, but this time I was set on having refusing just to have anything to do with it.

I turned out at the gates of the isolated joint the Doc used. It was a big four-story place with white marble and fashioned in the architecture of the old South. It was plastered round with magnolias and the perfume on a summer night was very exclusive. It was a . . . for that kind of thing. I don't . . . always gives me a pain in the nose.

I'd got half way up the path when a voice said:

'Well, well Joseph my dear boy! How nice to see you back. Are you quite well again?'

I knew the voice but I'm darned if I could see the owner about. I had a look in the magnolias on either side and behind a handy tree. He wasn't there. I looked towards the house, saw the front door was shut. No one was in the parlor either.

Hey Doc, I cried. 'Come out wherever you are. Where are you?'

'Here, Joseph,' he said quite plainly. 'Here my boy. Have you come along to see Mary?'

I thought I was going nuts myself. The voice was close at hand but the Doc wasn't. Not a sign of him. I got a crazy notion that maybe he'd discovered the secret of invisibility.

'Close your eyes, Joseph,' he told me. 'I used them. The voice wasn't far away, couldn't be. It sounded like it was almost on top of me. ON TOP OF ME IT WAS!'

I looked up and there about twenty feet in the air sitting in a cross-legged position on NOTHING was Doc Chester.

I had to have time to take this in. I stood and gaped at him as if I was seeing things and he sat there calmly smoking a cigarette and flicking ash down on me with a . . . finger. At last I said, 'Listen are you trying to drive me crazy? What is this game? Come down offa that whatever it is you're on and stop playing tricks on a guy who's a friend of the family. I know you're suspended on wires so don't say you aren't.'

He chuckled and passed his hand over his head and turned and swept his hand all round him. He said, 'No, no, no, no. There aren't any wires here, Joseph. I'm just sitting and I can't get down unless I go back through the door.'

"SPACE HOBO'S DIARY"

By Rice Ackman

CHAPTER ONE

Cartesian coordinate system that form
 N-dimensional space. [1] Since
 the number of dimensions is 2N
 dimensions, the total number of
 attributes is 2N. The total number of
 attributes is 2N. The total number of
 attributes is 2N.

[illegible]

42X on a 400-watt audio amplifier
shut the Venn 1500 lines
It is a Major Series. Here from
part of the 1500 which turned them
from X-Venn 1500.

[illegible]

A best make
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[illegible][illegible]

But it was no Green Mart at the two space guards had caught this time—it was an Earth

[illegible]

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 (2) $I W_A \cup I W_B = I W_{A \cup B}$
 (3) $I W_A \cap I W_B = I W_{A \cap B}$
 (4) $I W_A \cup I W_B = I W_{A \cup B}$
 (5) $I W_A \cap I W_B = I W_{A \cap B}$
 (6) $I W_A \cup I W_B = I W_{A \cup B}$

of the passage is that he was not a
student.

He said King "should know" the
subject was "a man I knew" who
"lived in the area".

The retired man from Nepal said: "I know a lot of things, but with a special interest in a particular one, my youth now. It is in truth depends about the seeds of suffering." (p. 14)

And Carter said they've peaked
I think. He's coming down.
Used to be a very healthy guy. I saw him
Pretend some Mustang engine was
Saturn. I was going and he had
was a couple of the people who were
man.

He said, "I am not even a saint."
He said, "What a terrible thing."

Γ is a $\mathbb{Z}$ -module and Γ is a $\mathbb{Z}$ -module.

$$\begin{aligned} & \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} + v \cdot \nabla_x - \Delta_x \right) f(t, x) = g(t, x) \\ & f(0, x) = f_0(x), \quad f(t, x) \geq 0, \quad f(t, x) \leq M, \end{aligned}$$

I

$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial L}{\partial \dot{x}} \right) = \frac{\partial L}{\partial x}$

the present time. We do not
have the same kind of a...

817 He r t e w l h t t t t
 12\ El w s t g e b p p t t

[illegible]

The *Sevens* I struggle with now is a
 Sir Henry's *Sevens* book to catch up on
 his *Sevens* under the *Sevens*. What is

Later on, separate work on cell
manipulation could

If I say "no" and you'll just have to take the responsibility.

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nothing of the change within a few more days. You agree?"

Manley nodded: "I agree."

.

No time was wasted. The operation to remove the brain eater from Manley's back was performed instantly. I was left in the other room with the two guards, who were drinking at Rekab's invitation. They grew somewhat rowdy as no signs of returning authority came from the lab. The wall was closed again; the scientists were engrossed in the removal of the brain eater.

The Martian guards engaged in a game of Sky Rummy in one corner whilst I wandered about the room inspecting the appointments. It was in this way that I came to the desk—and sat down, ostensibly to read a book, but actually to pen, under cover of the book, a last appeal for help. It was brief, to the point:

"To the space patrol guards, Ganthia, Mars,

Myself and a friend, Manley, are held prisoners in the home of the scientist Rekab. It is Rekab's intention to perform an experiment upon Manley, and later to kill us both. I cannot believe that he has any intention of permitting us to live, either of us.

If you receive this send help at once.

Griffon. X2X3X8.

Space Patrol Agent."

I added fictitious number and the Space Patrol Agent in the hope it would speed them up a little. They were not to know that I had long ago been thrown out of the service because of my brain disease.

Having completed the note I took it casually in my hand and made my way towards the rear window. I looked through the one way glass and into the street, and my eyes rested upon two space guards almost immediately beneath where I now stood. I glanced back at the Martians. They were both engrossed in their game. I pressed the operative button for the window and watched the glass slide gradually upwards. I stopped it at one inch, slid the note out and watched it flutter down to Mars. One of the guards picked it up with a surprised glance upwards, opened it out, and read.

I saw the excitement grow on his features, saw him hand it to his companion, and reach for the small portable microphone which would put him in touch with others of the patrol.

Then I moved hastily away from the window as the sliding panel opened and three men stepped from the interior of the laboratory. The old doctor, Rekab, and Manley!

Manley walked right over to the cabinet with an air of long familiarity and poured a drink for himself. His head was the least bit blood-stained at the nape of the neck, where a small amount of the blood had not been cleaned off.

He finished the Sitch, smacked his lips. Rekab said:

"So the operation was a complete success?"

"Apparently, yes," agreed the new Manley. "My brain feels quite at ease inside your skull, Manley . . ."

"For the present," smiled the new Rekab, and there was something peculiar in the way he smiled. There was also something peculiar in the way Manley, the new Manley, answered his smile. For he answered it with a pistol—a disintegration ray pistol!

He snapped: "It is well that you are all on that side. For you must all die, now my purpose is accomplished. I cannot afford to permit you to live, any of you. Not even you, my esteemed Doctor. I regret the necessity, but it is there . . ."

The Doctor betrayed no emotion at this sudden traitorous move; his features remained calm and impassive, in the manner of the Green Martians. He spoke no word of surprise, nor made any gesture.

Rekab turned the ray upon him: "Nobody will move . . ."

The beam shot out, touched the doctor, swivelled quickly to the two Martian guards who were still seated in the corner staring at their betrayer. All three crumbled in a split second; nothing now remained except three minute piles of ash on the floor.

Rekab turned to us. His eyes smiled cruelly: "As for you two, I fear you must go the same way. I can take no risk of my changed identity being discovered. I would be exiled from Earth. And although you have been valuable to me, Manley, you can no longer be of service."

Manley murmured: "I had expected no less from a man such as you, Rekab."

"Are you not becoming confused?" questioned the man in Manley's body. "I am MANLEY—and you are REKAB. The positions are reversed. It is I, Manley, who intends to dispose of you. It was you, Rekab, who promised me my life."

"If you mean to kill us have done with it," suggested the Green Martian. "The sooner I get my brain, or call it my soul, out of this filthy green carcass of yours, the better."

The gun was raised. Levelled . . .

And the door behind the gunman opened silently . . . a paralytic ray shot from the pistol in the hands of a space guard . . . and the new Manley screamed and dropped his own ray.

The space guards had answered the call for help in time!

.

And then Rekab's brain, in Manley's body, knew at last why Manley had wandered space, an outcast and hobo. Knew why Manley had made no strenuous objection to the change of

bodies . . . knew the reason for the peculiar smile upon the new Rekab's face.

The space guards gripped him by the shoulder, said: "A good night's work. Manley, I arrest you in the name of the Universal Council, for the murder, two years ago, of Valerin Vutin the First, Grand Duke of Jupiter."

And then, how strenuously Manley swore he was *Rekab's* brain in *Manley's* body. And how coolly Rekab denied it, said that Manley was raving mad, that he was and always had been Rekab, and that how could anyone possibly believe a brain could be transplanted from one skull to another, and if it were so who had done it?

No; he, Rekab, had captured Manley. He, Rekab, had brought him here to question him. Yes, he had performed a simple operation upon him, to force the truth of who he was from him. He knew he had no right lurking about the city of Ganthia. And at last Manley was dragged away—or rather, Rekab's protesting mind in Manley's body, was dragged away.

And it was ended.

Griffon had been fully revived. He sat now between Zilgos and Carter. Carter was speaking: "And so, Manley, or rather Rekab's brain in Manley's body, tried to escape from his captors and was blasted down by disintegration guns, thereby making it impossible to verify his story. And Manley, in Rekab's body, died recently from a dangerous growth which Rekab had contracted before he evolved the scheme whereby he might change bodies. I have al-

ways been curious about the events surrounding that capture of Manley and his furious pleas that he was really Rekab in Manley's body. Perhaps we might have got the truth had he not tried to escape his guards. Of course, when we came to question you, Griffon, your memory had already let slip the events of the night. But now . . . It won't ever let slip again . . ."

He handed Griffon a sleek mirror. Griffon studied his scarred head in it. The purple was already gone—the scar was sealing rapidly.

Carter went on: "If you're ready I have your first assignment *now*—the reason Manley murdered Grand Duke Vutin of Jupiter, was for the Jovian Kellerveit, a priceless gem. The killing took place in the Grand Duke's home, and Manley then hopped a space craft to Mars. Somewhere on Mars he disposed of that gem. That was where he obtained the money he had when you met him. Your first assignment will be to discover where that gem is now!"

Griffon said: "I'm ready."

Carter handed him a card of authority, and a picture of the gem. He shook hands silently.

Griffon, tall and straight once more, cured of the terrible disease, walked out of the room.

Carter watched him go; Zilgos said: "Do you think he can find the gem?"

And Carter smiled: "If anyone can, he can. What's more he doesn't need any disguise . . . everyone knows him as the space hobo . . . and that's the finest disguise he could have."

And Griffon, spinning from Asteroid 12X on liner thirteen, thought so too . . .

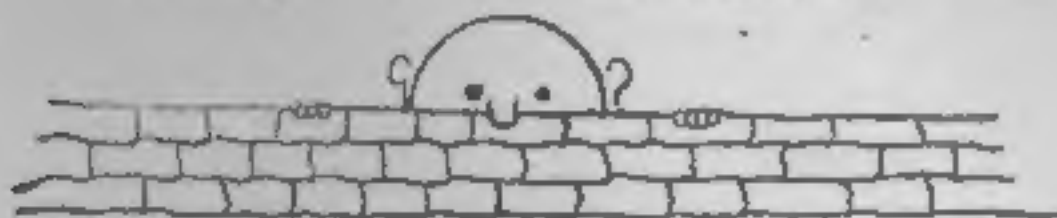
THE END.

All characters in this book are fictitious.

*If the names of actual persons appear it
is a matter of coincidence.*

CHAD SAYS

WOT NO LUCK!



SILLY

SHE HAS THE SECRET

Send 6d. for the History and a S.A.E. to H. H. Joan The Wad, Joan's Cottage, Lanivet, Cornwall.

Thousands say:—

In several million booklets you may have read extracts from testimonials received from as far back as 1930. We just take them at random. We possess more than TWELVE THOUSAND unsolicited testimonials, and we know from chance remarks that many who swear by Joan never trouble to report to us. Having so many, we can't possibly publish them all, nor can we constantly be changing our advertisements, and we have been content to keep to those originally published, but such is the immense interest being displayed we thought we would depart from our rule in a small measure and just publish 6 or 7 of the huge number that came in during 1945. Remember, similar testimonials have been coming in unceasingly since 1930.

NEVER WITHOUT MONEY

"I received one of your Histories about three weeks ago and it has brought me luck. Before I received your book I was always without money, but now, thanks to you, I am never without money! (Mrs.) G. O., Glos. 8.10.45."

INCREASE IN WAGES

"... already after one fortnight we have had luck. I won ... sum of £30. ... also have got a £1 per week increase in wages unexpected, so Joan the Wad must be our lucky Star. So please send Jack O'Lantern to make the pair complete. (Mrs.) D. M. Kirkgate, Leeds. 19.11.45."

LOST HIS JOAN—LOST HIS LUCK

"Please let me know how much to send for Joan the Wad and Jack O'Lantern. I had them both in 1931, but somehow lost them in hospital two years ago. I can honestly say that since losing them nothing has seemed to go right with me. I know what good luck Joan can bring by honest facts I have really experienced ... I certainly know that Joan the Wad is more than a lucky charm. Mr. E. E. S. Liphook, Hants. 10.11.45."

HOMELESS

LOOKED FOR A HOUSE FOR FOUR YEARS—Got Joan, Got a House, Got a job as well.

"Believe it or not, things have taken an astonishing change for the better since the day I received Joan—more than I have dared hope for before. I am being discharged from Services, Oct. 22nd. My family are homeless and I couldn't take a job. But now I have offered me a job with a cottage and good wages, one of my favourite jobs, tractor driving. Please note I have been after a house for just on four years. G. S., Army Fire Service, Slough. 10.10.45."

MARRIED A MILLIONAIRE

"... two of my friends have won £500 each since receiving your mascots, and another has married an American millionaire. ... Please forward me one Joan the Wad and one Jack O'Lantern. C. E. Levenshulme. 11.11.45."

BETTER JOB, MORE MONEY, LESS HOURS, IMPROVED HEALTH

"My dear Joan ... She has brought me continual good luck and her influence spreads to every sphere ... I have got a much better job ... greater wages ... less working hours ... and my health has greatly improved. I have always been a lonely kind of person, but ... a friend of the opposite sex, she is also lonely ... great opportunity for comradeship offered. So you see how the influence of Joan works. My pockets have always been full and I have had many wishes and desires fulfilled ... I would not part with Joan for her weight in gold, she is much too valuable in every way. Her powers extend all over the world, and she works unceasingly for the full benefit of her friends and adherents. She rides in my pocket day and night and never leaves me. ... A. H., Leeds, 9. 2.11.45."

All you have to do is to send a 6d. stamp and a stamped addressed envelope for the history to:

102, JOAN'S COTTAGE, LANIVET, BODMIN

All characters in this story are fictitious and imaginary
and bear no relation to any living person.



Printed in Gr. Britain and Published by
HAMILTON & CO. (Stafford) LTD
1 & 2, Melville Court, Goldhawk Road, London, W.12.